DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 338 737 UD 028 353

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TITLE The Vanishing African-American Male Student in Middle and High School College Preparatory Classrooms: Present Condition--Probable Causes--Intervention Strategies. Implications for School Administrators.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 90p.; Master of Arts Project, California State University, San Bernardino.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Academic Aspiration; Black Students; *Black Youth; Dropouts; Educational Attitudes; Intermediate Grades; *Males; Middle Schools; Parent Influence; School Districts; School Statistics; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Students; Sociocultural Patterns; Statistical Data; *Student Attrition; Urban Education; *Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS *African Americans

ABSTRACT

This master thesis examines the African American male students in San Bernardino (California) middle schools and high schools in order to compare those findings to findings in the literature and to be able to recommend ways to improve their performance. The study reviews available statistical data about African American male students compiled by the San Bernardino City Unified School District with a survey of African American male students in three middle schools and three high schools in the San Bernardino school system. Of the 180 surveys distributed, 138 were returned for analysis. The survey results show that overall, participants operate close within the patterns established in the literature findings. The analysis of the school district's statistical data indicates that the academic progress of the African American male student is closest to other groups at the first grade level. As grade levels increase, the African-American male's academic progress begins to separate from other groups. This trend may begin in first grade with students grouped for reading according to ability. The data in this project indicate a pattern of multi-generational school failure with parents, who performed poorly while they were in school, now influencing the next generation of students. Also included are 45 references. The survey is appended. (JB)

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THE VANISHING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE STUDENT IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE PREPARATORY CLASSROOMS:

Present Condition— Probable Causes—Intervention Strategies Implications For School Administrators

A Project Submitted to

The Faculty of the School of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Degree Of

Masters of Arts

in

Education: Administration Option

By

O. Ajamu Jumal, M.A.

San Bernardino, California

1991

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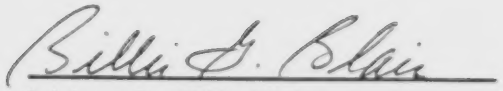

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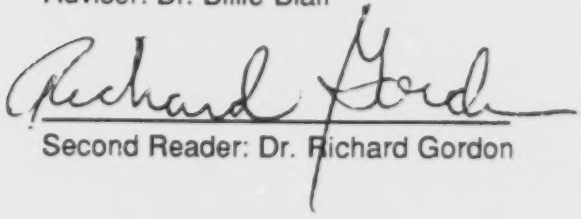

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Abstract

THE VANISHING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE STUDENT IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE PREPARATORY CLASSROOMS:
Present Condition— Probable Causes—Intervention Strategies
O. Ajamu Jumal, M.A.
California State University, San Bernardino, 1991

Statement of the Problem. "...How far down is the bottom?...Lord—please let this be the bottom" (Hansberry,1959). This quote perhaps most aptly describes the present frustration of the African-American male (AAM) student. The AAM student is the most at risk segment of the school population in America, the group most at-risk of not being able to read or compute basic mathematics—and the group most at risk of being absent from the H.S. graduation process. Yet, the AAM student is the most at risk in being suspended from school, placed in Special Education classes or becoming a school drop-out. The African-American male is, therefore, the most at risk of not receiving a college education.

Procedure. This project has combined literature findings, along with statistical data compiled by the San Bernardino City Unified School District (S.B.C.U.S.D), to create an opinion survey specifically targeted for African-American male students. The survey indicated, with some exceptions, that the attitudes expressed by the S.B.C.U.S.D. AAM students reflected that of the literature findings. Both survey and findings indicate that the poor academic performance of the AAM student is more the product of home environment; which is then augmented by school practices—whether inadvertent or by design—that effectively exclude many AAM students from participating in college preparatory classrooms.

Recommendations. Some of the recommendations developed from this project include: establishment of parent support apparatus on a district-wide basis for the purpose of long-term simultaneous education programs designed to maintain the parents' involvement in their child's education, while at the same time, advancing their own academic skills, identification of African-American male children for GATE in the early grades, K-3, and supply direct support to the home. This support should include an "academic adoption" program. Also recommended by this project is the early modeling of reading in the home environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before time fleets and memories fade let me capture this moment to express my sincere thanks to a few individuals whose talents are immensely appreciated, without them—No project! Thanks to Dr. Billie Blair, who watched this project develop from the embryonic stages of an oral report on a journal article in her Curriculum 654 class, for encouragement from the very beginning to continue work on the African-American male student subject matter a masters project. I should also thank Dr. Blair for allowing me to interrupt her evening classes desperately seeking needed advice on deciphering this strange, APA style thing? — and thanks again to Dr. Blair introducing me to Dr. Richard Gordon, an excellent choice for second reader. Dr. Gordon, with his excellent knowledge of the subject matter, immediately steered me directly to essential literary sources—and most importantly, he also shared with me his keen and valuable sense of focus and organization of which this project is definitely indebted.

In using this occasion as my acceptance speech at the Academy Awards, let me thank the other "guys" in the trenches, Ms. Carol Clarke for decoding my creative prose, Ms. Delores Wynn for a mammoth job in both decoding my script, then helping to tabulate—by counting and counting and counting and then counting again, survey queries—to Ms. Gigi Jackson for those hours spent in the library pulling articles and also for helping to distribute the surveys to the students. And of course, thanks to all the students that assisted the project by completing the survey. Yo—Kahari Jumal (definite relationship), solid dude— for offering personal insights on the subject matter from the vantage point of a senior attending high school in the San Bernardino City Unified School District.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to review the causes and ramifications of the declining enrollment of the African-American male student in the middle and secondary school classrooms, with special concern focused on the under representation of the African-American male (AAM) students on the college preparatory track or in college bound courses. This absence of the African-American male student in high school preparatory classes has led directly to the recent, serious decline of black males enrolling in college. Since secondary education is intertwined with the skills the student receives on the primary level, this project will also examine the related under-achievement of the African-American male students at the elementary school level, with focus on the under-representation of the African-American male student in the Gifted and Talented (GATE) program.

The overall design of this project is first to establish a broad literature base, reviewing several conditions and problems that are confronting the African-American male student currently in school. The literature covers the present situation of the African-American male student as it now exists in the school system, the possible causes of his continuing decline in academic performance, and intervention strategies proposed to arrest this decline.

From this expanded literature review, the project will then narrow the focus to selected areas of concern for further consideration. These selected areas include; home and family influences, black male attitudes toward school and education, negative peer group pressure ridiculing academic success, and ethnic self-esteem. This closer review will consist of both statistical data analysis and African-American male student survey. The survey and data

analysis will concentrate on African-American male students attending San Bernardino City Unified School District S.B.C.U.S.D., San Bernardino, CA.

The survey conducted was designed to address some of the issues explored in the literature findings. Six middle and high schools of the district took part in the sampling which accounted for approximately 9% of the African-American male student's enrolled in S.B.C.U.S.D. secondary schools. The data gained from both the survey and statistical data were then reviewed for the purpose of making recommendations and suggestions for consideration as they relate to education of the African-American male student. The recommendations take into consideration some immediate needs and long term programs aimed at reversing the downward slide of the African-American male student. Also, it is the hope that this project has assisted in locating some of the answers that fit into the greater picture—a picture that when eventually completed, enables the African-American male student to start on the long journey toward academic excellence.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The alarm bell has been sounded by educators across the country in empirical studies and commentaries that the African-American male is the most at risk segment of the school population in America. The group most at-risk for not being able to read and computing basic mathematics, the group most at risk of being absent from the graduation process. Yet, the group most at risk in being suspended from school, placed in Special Education classes and becoming a school drop-out. The African-American male is, therefore, the most at risk never to receive a college education. Once this group of students has failed to complete the educational process, odds are that the African-American male will frequently be unemployed, involved in drugs or gangs—or become the one in every four black males that will end up either in jail, on probation or on parole.

Through the 1970's and the early 1980's, both African-American males and females made significant progress in gaining access to higher education in the nation's colleges and universities, although the trend for the black female remained steady, for the black male this trend has not only reversed, it has begun to spiral downward at an ever-accelerating pace. Black males are the least likely group to apply for college, the least likely to be accepted, least likely to enroll and, if ever enrolled, they are the most likely to drop-out (Patton, 1987). However, the growing absence of the African-American male's participation in higher education is only the product at the end of an educational pipeline that begins at home and in kindergarten—with both the home and educational system either willingly or inadvertently assisting the process of failure.

The school failure of the African-American male obviously does not begin at the college door but rather, the disappearance of the African-American male on the college campus is where the school system's failure becomes most pronounced. Between the sixth and tenth grades, or ages 9-14, most black males have made the decision, though it might not a conscious one, that they are going to school or jail (Dent,1989). It is during this time that the academic progress of the African-American male and female part company. It is during this time that the grade point average (GPA) of the black male begins to drop, school attendance slides, special education referrals increase, school suspensions escalate and the drop-out rate of this group rises.

The problem, as reviewed by this project, are the possible causes and ramifications of the declining enrollment of the African-American male in the middle and secondary schools with a special concern focused on the under-representation of the African-American male student on the college preparatory academic track or in college bound courses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for this project focuses on the current state of education for the African-American male in middle and secondary schools in selected school districts along with the perceived causes, related consequences and intervention strategies. There are several studies on the low academic performance of the African-American student in which much of the debate has centered on whether this low academic performance was due to ethnicity or to the fact that most African-American students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Recently, the prevailing thought on the subject is that the socioeconomic status of the family is the prime factor. "...The dominant view is that low school performance is due to the children's low-class [socioeconomic] background." (Ogbu, 1988 p.163).

However, low socioeconomic background does little to explain the growing gap between the African-American male and female student. Both figuratively and literally speaking, they are brother and sister. Both come from the same conditions, same background, can be from the same house, home and family, yet they are rapidly separating in academic performance. These separate paths taken by the black male and female begin to dramatically manifest themselves in both academic achievement and behavioral patterns in the fifth and sixth grades (Strickland, 1990). It is at this level that the black female, on average, becomes the better student while the black male displays an abrupt increase in classroom discipline referrals, suspensions, expulsions and poor attendance notices. With such a pattern, the specter of dropping-out of school looms large in their future.

To review the advances that the African-American male has made in middle and secondary schooling, it is first necessary to look at the the telling aftermath of this condition, low college enrollment. The problem with African-American males and schools does not abruptly appear in the middle school. In fact, there is a gradual slide from the first grade where the black male is abreast or ahead in some subjects when measured against other ethnic and gender groups. However, by the time sixth grade is reached, the typical African-American male is 1.6 years behind all other groups in reading, language and mathematics (Holman,1985). To state this fact more concisely, by the time the African-American male enters middle school, he doesn't possess the basic and fundamental academic skills to compete in the classroom.

Preparation to be competitive in college is made all the more difficult when the preparation starts at the college door. By the time the African-American male completes the 12th grade, he is, on the average, 3.3 grades behind in reading and language (Witherspoon,1987). An examination of college enrollment figures illustrates his regression. In a study of African-American males in higher education Patton, (1988) points out that the percentage of black men enrolled in the public colleges in the metropolitan area near Atlanta, Georgia declined 4.5% between 1980 and 1985, while all other ethnic groups of both gender, including the black female, increased anywhere from 1 to 4%. The same study shows that fewer black males received Bachelor's degrees in 1985 than in 1978, a decline of nearly 17%. Wilson (1990) states that although college enrollment is generally in a downward trend, the proportional decline of the African-American male in the 1990 freshman class is greater, nationally, than that of any other ethnic

or gender group. While the percentage of white male and female students is approximately 50% or equal to each other, the African-American female is at 59%, while her male counterpart is 41% in college enrollment figures. Dr. Norman Francis, the president of Xavier University, states "..when it come to college enrollment and retention, black males are becoming an endangered species" (Marshall, 1987 p.46). The fact that African-American males are disappearing at the college level is primarily because they are becoming invisible in the secondary and middle schools—especially in the college preparatory classrooms, and it is the middle and secondary schools that are the focal point of this project.

This project has organized the literature review according to the specific areas of concern as expressed by researchers that have studied or reviewed different aspects of the African-American males current participation in public education. The material is presented in the following order: review of the present condition; African-American male's in middle and secondary schools; possible causes; intervention strategy designed specifically to address the present condition of the African-American male student, and a summary of the literature reviewed.

Present Condition: Profile of African-American Male in Middle and Secondary School

Academics. In a report prepared by McDaid, Abbott and Borton (1990) for San Diego City Schools, data is included that outlines the current academic progress of the African-American male. Citing the 1989-90 figures, the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) in grades 7, 9 and 11, the African-American male averages 23 points below the 50 percentile in reading, language and mathematics while the average of all other students

are 9 points above the 50 percentile, an overall 32-point difference in CTBS scores. The cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2,732 7th-12th grade African-American males was 1.79, with less than 5% of this figure maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or better. Of the 397 African-American males that met San Diego district graduation standards in 1990 (approx 6.5% of class), only 3.5% of that figure met college entrance requirements. This figure would indicate that approximately 96% of the African-American males that graduated were not in college preparatory courses or on the college prep track. According to Witherspoon (1987) "...Urban schools have failed the black students. They have produced hundreds of thousands of functional illiterates, unable to compete for the increasingly technical jobs and condemned to a life of poverty" (p.155).

A report on the New Orleans LA Public Schools ("Educating Black Male," 1987) on the status of the African-American male student, the findings were similar to the San Diego report (McDaid, et al.). According to the New Orleans report, although black males constitute 43% of the public school population, they accounted for 57.5% of the non-promotions, and while it is true that the black females are heavily represented in the lowest quartile of reading, mathematics and language scores, their performance is consistently above that of the black male.

Special Education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 1984, African-Americans, predominantly male, constituted 38% of the enrollment in Educable Mentally Impaired (EMI) while in the same year they constituted 15% of the national enrollment (Chunn, 1988). In the San Diego School District report (McDaid, et al.), the number of African-American males referred for Learning Handicapped (LH) classes in 1989-90 was 17.4% of total district enrollment, which represented over twice the rate at which other

groups were identified for special education. Of the identified Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED) students, African-American males constituted the only group that was proportionately higher percent then its regular student population. Duncan (1988) contends that putting the label SED on a child is like giving them the educational equivalent of the death penalty. With all of the negative connotations, African-American male students continue to fill the special education classrooms diagnosed as Learning Handicapped (LH), Educable Mentally Impaired (EMI), SED and other similarly structured programs across the nation. Cote (1986) suggests, among other things, that one of the major factors causing this overpopulation of black males in EMI could be culturally biased testing and the cultural differences between the teachers and students.

According to Dent (1989), African-American boys score lower than any other group of youngsters on standardized tests and are, consequently, in disproportionate numbers, wrongly classified in programs for the mentally retarded or on the track for slow learners. This study also points out that African-American males are twice as likely to be placed in a special education class as a white male child. For example, in Michigan, Educable Mentally Impaired (EMI) classes have more than twice the number of African-American males enrolled as their percentage in the student population.

Gifted and Talented (GATE), is also classified as a special education program, one in which African-Americans are noticeably under-represented. In 1987, blacks constituted 15% of national enrollment yet only comprised 8% of the national GATE program; and this 8% is dominated by African-American females although an exact percentage is not available. Over the

past few years, the percentages of African-American males in the GATE program has been steadily slipping, while African-American participation in EMI has been increasing (Chunn, 1988). In New Orleans Public schools, African-American males comprise 43% of the district population, yet constitute less than 1% the the GATE program ("Ed. Black Males", LA). Of the students in the San Diego District identified for GATE, only 3.2% were African-American males (McDaid, et al, 1990)

Suspension and Expulsions. The number of African-American males suspended is highly disproportionate to their percentage in the overall student population, and this trend seems to be constant in school districts nationwide. Between grades 7 and 10, the suspension rate of African-American males is extremely high. African-American males at certain times constituted as high as 69% of all middle school suspensions in the San Diego district. During the same 1989-90 period, African-American males received 37.8% of all expulsions. In San Diego City Schools in 1989-90, African-American males comprised 59% of all district suspensions, yet they constituted only 9% of the student body. District wide, 23.4% of the African-American male students were at one time suspended in the 1989-90 school year. "The African-American male receives more suspensions than any other ethnic group and starts receiving them earlier, beginning in kindergarten, considerably more than any other" (McDaid, et al .p. 10). New Orleans Public Schools report that during 1986-87 school year African-American males comprised 43% of the school population, yet 65% of the suspensions and 80% of all expulsions.

Dropout Rate. In New York City, while African-Americans make up 75% of the student population in some of the schools, 72% of that figure fails to

complete high school (Witherspoon,1987). In the San Diego District, the dropout figures for the African-American male is relatively close to that of all students, 7.9 for African-American males and 6.8 for all other students. The figures for New Orleans Schools similar: although African-American males comprise 45% of the student population, they account for approximately 45% of the districts dropouts. In Michigan, the incidence of African-American school dropout is considered a disaster. It is estimated that 30 to 60%, (depending on location), of African-American students that enter the ninth grade fail to receive a high school diploma (Cote, 1986).

Causes: Present Condition

Substantial evidence can be cited by numerous researchers as to the causes of the present plight of the African-American male in education and in the overall community. A report on the "Crisis of the black child", Cote (1986), cites a breakdown in the basic African-American family structure as one of the most serious causes of the crisis. Considerable mention is given to the fact that many of the African-American households are headed by a single mother or grandmother; the unemployment rate runs as high as 25% in many black communities; and poor heath care and lack of proper home supervision are major factors which contribute to the decline in school performance of the African-American male. Keller (1989) identifies the possible causes of the African-American male's decline in education as, among others, "choice of work over education, poor preparation, family deterioration and negative attitudes and behavior toward school" (p. 43).

Some of the material reviewed by this project as related to causes are: perception of the black male in the school environment, and the effects of tracking and grouping and negative peer pressure.

Perception of the African-American male in the school environment. "The failure of African-American children to learn in the current educational system has been attributed, in part, to the negative expectations that teachers have for them" (DeMeis &Turner, 1978, p.77). A study completed by DeMeis and Turner (1978), was designed to assess the effects of teacher reaction to a student's race, physical attractiveness and spoken dialect. The results indicated that the teachers were heavily influenced by these three variables, and any combination of these three variables proved all the more to the students' disadvantage. Teachers consistently rated African-American students more negatively than they did the white students. In one demonstration, despite the fact that both white and African-American students were given identical material to read from a standard text, the teachers consistently rated the white students performance superior to that of the African-Americans.

African-American students speaking Black English dialect were even more negatively received. All students, African-American and whites, were judged more positively when they spoke in Standard English. The study concluded with "... it was shown that the teacher's ratings [grading] of the student and the student's performance [in the study] are highly consistent with one another [what the teacher expected]" (DeMeis & Turner, 1978 p. 84).

Low teacher expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecy. The self-fulfilling prophecy can begin with a false conception—black skin, black dialect equals non-reader— the teacher teaches to these expectations proving them correct. " African-American children have become victims of low teacher expectations which eventually equates to self-fulfilling prophecies, and it must be pointed out that black teachers as well have

problems with expectations" Chunn (1988 p. 97). According to Witherspoon (1987), teachers have very low expectations of the African-American male, perceive them as slow learners and intellectually inferior. Witherspoon continues in a similar vein "...educational system is white, middle class oriented and teachers help fulfill the prophecy that black and poor youth are doomed to failure" (p.157). The African-American male is stereotyped as a non-learner, and his dark image is consistently sized upon by opinion makers in both newspaper copy and Hollywood fiction to conjure up negative, sinister dangerous and evil illusions that frighten the majority and reinforce the negative stereotype (Lemelle, 1988). Many teachers have succumbed to this negative illusion and at times act frightened or intimidated by even the youngest African-American male child. "They fear our kids...they view African-American males as threats" (Whitaker,1991 p.22) It is further stated by Lemelle (1988) in a paraphrase of Harry Edwards, Sociologist, "...blacks are a macho hustle in American culture...the role of the black male is that of a prostitute to masculine institutional systems—school athletics, military and the prisons—where macho is the dress needed to pass through...the more black males the better" (p. 226). Lemelle makes it clear that he feels the assault upon the African-American male child by the educational establishment is premeditated, and that the African-American male student is functioning at the level desired by the school establishment.

Tracking and ability grouping Tracking is a practice used by school districts ostensibly to separate students into classes according to ability. Some school districts use a two-track system, one track college bound and the other non-college bound. However, many of the schools districts in California have gone to the three-track system: advanced placement or

honors track, college preparatory and non-college bound level. At one time the non-college bound track was the vocational education track in which trade and craft skills could be taught, but few of these vocational tracks have kept pace with the changing skills demanded of the modern work force. So, rather then vocational education, the third or vocational track has generally become the remedial track in which we find most of the African-American males (Chunn). Classes offered on this track are non-college transferrable but do lead to a high school diploma.

However, it has been confirmed in recent studies that the tracking system today "reflects and perpetuates social and racial inequality" (Glazer,1990,p.746). Oakes (1985), found that students with the same test scores but of different ethnic groups were placed on different tracks. She further states that counselors and teachers are very stereotypical with their judgement about ethnic groups. In Selma, Alabama many of the African-Americans with good test scores were placed in the bottom track leaving the higher-level track almost entirely white (Glazer, 1990). Oakes (1988), in another study, states "The placing of black youth on the academic track for science and mathematics is rare...many districts consign the science classes exclusively to the upper track and are the domain of those students only".

Chunn (1988) discusses the fact that students are placed on tracks according to standardized tests, grades, mental age, and administrative/ counselor recommendations. However, in many cases, the key determinant is personal perception—eyeballing the student and placing on the track which staff feels is the appropriate. There are limited academic expectations of the student on the lower track. These students are primarily expected to maintain good school attendance and and avoid becoming a

behavior problem. The student's attendance is very important because average daily attendance (ADA), is what the basis for school revenue. As long as the child shows-up at school, they count towards ADA, regardless of which track they are assigned. Glazer sums up the caliber of education delivered on the lower track in the following terms:

> The lower tracks education is qualitatively and quantitatively inferior to the upper track. For example, students of the upper track are taught differential equations, creative writing, and literature. Conversely, lower track students have basic arithmetic, grammar drills and letter forms...lower track students receive less of whatever is distributed educationally...What has happened is that the middle-class parents have lobbied and won for the top tracks—excellent teachers, modern equipment, good textbooks (1990 p.750,758).

Racial discrimination and segregation are practiced in many of the public schools today disguised as tracking or ability grouping. Many of the schools employ separate lunch and recess schedules for the different tracks (Glazer, 1990). Many times the college prep track is kept "white only" with the possible expectation of a few token African-Americans— usually female. According to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), tracking has sufficiently re-segregated many of the schools, not just in the South, but all over the country (Glazer).

Ability grouping, the practice of placing students in a high or low group within the same classroom, is used extensively in the elementary schools across the country. Eighty percent of the teachers responding in one survey stated they used ability grouping in the classroom, and only one quarter of

this group of teachers stated their groups were flexible enough for students to change groups (Chunn, 1987). Some teachers attempt to disguise that fact that they have ability groups from the children by referring to the groups as the "Red", "Green" or the "Tigers" and "Ninjia Turtles" type names. However, the students are sufficiently perceptive to penetrate this kind of deception. The students refer to the reading groups as the "smart" or the "dumb" group and it doesn't take long for a kid to figure out that the children in his group are the slow or poor readers. Since children from low socioeconomic status tend to score poorly on standardized achievement tests, many are automatically assigned to the bottom groups (Glazer, 1990). This would seem to be a major disadvantage of ability grouping—planting the seed of low academic expectations in the minds of the student, low self-esteem in the child and low expectations in the teacher.

Negative counter culture influence. "Running buddies', 'the boys', 'the posse' reward academic failure and rebellious behavior." (Dent, 1989, p.56). Many African-American males believe that if they are academically successful and obedient to school authority, they will be branded "white acting" by ethnic peers and forced out of the "crowd" because they did not conform to the negative group standards. In some cases, it is more important for the African-American male to gain peer acceptance than to excel in academics (Dent, 1989). This author also quotes the remarks of a fifteen year old Nashville youth "...If I study all the time, I won't have any friends...I would be like some white nerd who studies all the time...studying all the time is like white folks" (Dent, 1989, p.56). Hill states that the non-participation of the African American male student in the school process amounts to a rite-of-passage into manhood, a rite that is a necessary yet

absent social and cultural component in present day African-American society: "...the schools have replaced the old 'rites' with a new rite of passage into manhood that is falling everyone concerned (Hill, 1987, p.8)

This perceived tradition of negative reaction towards academics can perhaps be found rooted in the slave history of the African-American past. Trying to read and write was perceived by some slaves as trying to act like the master, acting like you are ashamed of your color and blackness (Lemelle, 1988). During the revival of Black nationalism or the Black Power movement among African-Americans during the 1960's, the most haunting parable depicting this ingrained distain for the "acting white" black person or the "wanna-be" was colorfully stated by the most venerated personality of the 1960's black nationalist movement, Malcolm X. Although Malcolm was addressing the issue of integration versus separation of blacks in American life, the analogy well fits the logic used by those who colored education white or less than being black:

> ...There was the house negro and the field negro...now that house negro lived in the Big House with his master, he loved his master, when the master got sick—that house negro would say "wee sick masta, wee sick "...that house negro cared more of the master then he cared for himself. When it was time to eat, the house negro ate what ever the master left on his plate...that house negro wanted to be just like the master, he dressed like the master, talked liked the master and identified more with the master more then he did with himself.
>
> Then there was the field negro, he lived out in a raggedy shack—he hated the master—when the field negro heard that

> the master was sick, he'd hope the master would die. When the master's cotton fields caught on fire, the field negro fanned the flames, he hoped the fire would burn every thing up, including the master and his house. The field negro just wore whatever he could find for clothes, he worked in the fields choppin' cotton from can't see in the morning 'til can't see at night. The field negro hated everything about the master, but he was proud of his blackness...When the field negro tried to get the house negro to run away from slavery and the plantation, the house negro said ..."iz you crazy!! You want me to run away from this good house, from all this good food, leave these nice clothes, leave my good masta...you's crazy...you can run if you want to, but I'z stayin' right here with the masta..." that field negro ran away, and when he was caught, the master had him beaten, but he'd heal up an try running away again... and again...he hated slavery, he hated the master and all the master stood for... *We still have a lot of them house negroes [mentality] runnin' around here today*...(Malcolm X, 1963).

The "field negro"—that defiant, challenging, lover of his People, survivor of pain and torture—strong defender of this own self identity and brimming with self-esteem, became the cultural metaphor that African-American males strongly identified with as positive and correct; defiant of the white establishment and defender of black values. On the other hand, the image of the "house negro" became the object of ridicule and shame. For an African-American male to be perceived as a "house negro" or Uncle Tom became a scourge on his personality, worst than the most dreaded disease. During the 1980's, again, there is a strong undercurrent of African-American

nationalism among the young males. This revival in ethnic pride primarily manifests itself in "hip hop", or "rap" music, the music of choice for many young African-American males. Masculinity and self esteem are very important concepts for African-American males at this age. In a study of adolescent self-esteem and peer acceptance (Rust and McCraw, 1984), it was found that self-esteem among African-American males rated higher than any other group when it came to race. They continued "... black males with androgynous identities, high masculinity, scored even higher in self-esteem and pride than all other males tested" (p.359). Although there are many young African-American males that have no problem blending the academic skills with the strong masculine persona as portrayed in Malcolm's parable, there is a real fear in some youth that becoming academically successful is an attempt to shed cultural identity and act white. "A lot of African-American males reject academic success out of some misguided love for their race and culture." (Dent p.59).

The paradox remains: that despised house negro learned to read, write and speak like his master—while that courageous field negro remained proud, defiant, masculine...and illiterate.

One of the major areas in which the African-American male finds himself in direct conflict with school and academics is oral communication, the use of slang expression or Black English. It would seem that African-American males consciously strive to speak Black English while resisting the attempt to have him speak "correctly" i.e, Standard English. Ogbu (1989) in a study he completed with African-American students at Capital High School in Washington D.C., which is 99% black, found that speaking standard English was scorned by the students as an "acting white" activity. Black English as

used in 'hip-hop", "rap" and other forms that applies different, even opposite meaning of the standard English usage of a word or phase, with the express intent to create a dialect understood only by blacks. Solomon (1988) sees black English as a language form that hides the real meaning of what is being said...a language that purposefully turns around undesirable phases to make them positive.

For whatever the reasons African-American males put forth to reject the use of standard English, the fact remains that using black English in an academic setting lowers teacher expectations, allows for more negative teacher ratings and tends to measurably bias teachers against students that fail to use standard English (DeMeis & Turner, 1978). Although the school may view the use of black dress, style and language as negative, this presents a serious conflict in respect to the position of the African-American male and according to Lemelle (1988), "... The black male student is looking for legitimate ways to express his mature masculinity...the crisis of African-Americans masculinity [pursuit of] excellence in schools is a recapitulation of social inequality...The social system is designed to keep black masculinity in its imprisoned place in American life" (p. 228).

Intervention strategy designed to address present condition

The problem of the African-American male vanishing from the middle and secondary college preparatory classes is endemic to many school districts across the nation. Many of the interventions attempting to correct the situation are designed to increase the Afrocentric focus of schools. Afrocentric, the concept of placing the African-American in the center of his education as opposed to the strictly eurocentric focus of curriculum which is considered the present emphasis (Raspberry, Gilliam 1990). Gilliam also

expresses the fact that African-American contributions to the histories has been omitted or down-played, which causes black children to applaud the contributions of many other cultures while becoming ashamed of their own. Another project that has found the Afrocentric concept beneficial is Higher Order Thinking (HOT). This project not only advances Afrocentricity, but is a comprehensive program to develop higher order thinking skills in children of the urban impacted middle schools with a design for reasoning, reading and writing skills. (Fluellen,1989). But Afrocentrism is not championed by all, Raspberry (Raspberry & Gilliam,1990) contends that although black culture is important in the education of African-American children, it is important for all children and that the Afrocentric approach being presently advanced will exacerbate the problem and cause black children to be further isolated.

San Diego City Schools has developed a pilot program at four elementary schools focused on improving the performance of the African-American male. The program concentrates its energy in five areas: student information, instructional support, cultural awareness, parent participation and co-curricular activities. The program continues, but with the preliminary results published, the initial results of the effort show little if any improvement in the academic condition of the African-American male student. (McDaid, et al). The report did indicate that of the five areas, the area receiving the least amount of attention, according to hours invested, is parent participation—the one area that is directly addressed by the Oakland City Schools.

Paying Parents to Parent. An innovative program designed to correct some of the problems in the classroom is that of paying parents of the predominantly African-American (59%) Oakland School District to attend and be part of the classroom. The program is not only designed to instruct

the parent in how to work with their child academically, but also how to be a better parent. Although the project is small, the concept of getting the community directly involved in the school while at the same time helping the parent gain deficient academic skills is rapidly gaining supporters as an idea whose time has arrived. The program includes: 1) placing state social workers directly at the school site and 2), holding peer education and mentoring sessions in which high achieving students work directly with students that are experiencing difficulty (Merl,1991).

The family, community and school "coalition" established in Oakland is not just restricted to elementary schools. High schools also receive state social services funding for vocational training along with on site-social workers. "Helping families improve their circumstances is one of the major components of this program " states the Oakland Superintendent of Schools, Brekke-Miesner, "parenting courses will bring results in the long term...parents will become better participants in their children's educations" (Merl, 1991 p.A3).

This program is not without strong criticism from educators that disdain the fact of paying parents for something they should be doing anyway. The concept of paying parents to be parents may become a moot point in the near future according to program administrators. There has been such a positive response to the pilot program that, in expanding the program, five parents applied for every one slot available. The parents were more interested in being involved in the parenting classes in than receiving the stipend. This "coalition" of school, family and community forces to address the present condition of the African-American student is a long term investment, and although initial results are not available, the popularity of the program is rapidly spreading to other nearby districts (Merl, 1991).

The concepts such as paying parents to attend school and concentrating on afrocentric curriculum may seem innovative strategies, however, in the section which follows, one of the more radical intervention strategies designed specifically to address the situation of African-American male education in some of the most impacted urban areas.

Separate schools for African-American males. An intervention strategy proposed to arrest the downward spiral of the African-American male in the present educational system is the creation of separate schools, in public school districts, that are exclusively designed for black males. The establishment of separate schools for boys and girls to assist educational process and improve discipline is not a new concept and is readily utilized in private academies, parochial schools and even some public school districts across the country. However, the issue becomes totally different when the separate school for boys is a public institution which claims that it is primarily for African-American males with black male teachers. Add to this mixture the introduction of Afrocentric curriculum, and the result is a very visceral debate.

One of the first attempts at the separate classroom or school solution was in Dade County, Florida where kindergarten and first grade classrooms were opened for fatherless African-American males. That was three years ago. Based on the initial success achieved in Dade County, in the spring of 1991, the school districts in Minneapolis and Detroit joined Milwaukee, New York City and Baltimore School Districts in opening schools especially for African-American male students (Weisman,1991).

"Advocates of this [separate] approach believe low expectation is largely responsible for the poor academic performance of the African-

American boys" (Tifft, 1990 p.83) In the view of the proponents for this strategy, the African-American male is already tracked to classes by themselves. Many schools districts have placed black males on remedial tracks or in special education classrooms when in fact the student is actually mislabeled. There are aspects about the education he is receiving that he is resisting, and he would be better served if he were enrolled in a school designed to meet the social and academic needs of the African-American male (Weisman, 1991).

Under this proposed separate system, African-American males in the primary grades K-3, are placed in classrooms with African-American male teachers and an Afrocentric curriculum. Some of the districts advocating this program are 80 to 90% African-American enrollment at present, so all that was necessary was to remove the girls from the classroom and bring in black male teachers. The concept here is that the teacher is also serving as a positive African-American role model for the male students. In many of the large metropolitan urban areas, according to the advocates, there are few positive black male figures in the community for the young males to emulate which allows the negative male figure to fill the vacuum. A large majority of the homes are headed by single mothers or by the grandmother, usually leaving the masculine aspects of the black boy's personality to develop on the streets with peer groups (Dent, 1989).

Tifft, quoting some black educators states "putting blacks males in separate classrooms or schools will reverse his downward plunge"(p.83). The advocates of this point of view believe most of the African-American male boys are instructed in elementary school by a white female teaching staffs leaving the impression that academic success is "white and feminine".

Accordingly, these teachers have difficulty relating to the black male child and they naturally attempt to mold them into traditional white culture. Black males are viewed as "hyperactive and aggressive" according to Taylor, the teachers have low expectations of the African-American male which allows for the child to develop a low personal self-esteem (Tifft, 1990 p.84).

"This whole scheme smacks of educational irresponsibility" was the response from education professionals in Milwaukee upon the adoption of the pilot separation program (Lucas, 1991 p.68). "This is just another plan for bigotry," stated Dr.Walter Farrell Jr., Professor at the University of Wisconsin, as reported by Lucas (1991 p. 68). "This is a new way for African-American male to be separated from the mainstream of society...it leaves the door wide open for the white bigot and we segregate ourselves into educational prisons" (p.69). Educators who are detractors from the separate school concept for African-American males seem to be well in the majority, and many African-Americans feel this type of approach toward solving the problem is in actuality taking a large step backward—it flies in the face of more than 25 years of civil rights progress (Tifft, 1990). "A return to segregation" was the out-cry of many that attended the school board meetings that voted to establish separate black male schools, and that the concept represented a slap in the face of cultural integration (Weisman, 1991. p. 5).

In an article by Whitaker (1991), it relates the remarks on separate schools for black males by James Comer, Director of the Child Study Center at Yale University, "... By separating African-American males, educators may unwittingly increase the sense of isolation many of these young men feel and may make it difficult for them to cope with the larger society later in life..." (p. 22). Although Comer states that positive role models are helpful, he feels

that it is just as important that African-American males receive the positive advantages of cultural diversity and that there is no need to setup a role model "exclusively from one's own group"(Tifft p.84). If, say the critics, white female-headed classrooms are bad for black male students, then they must be equally as disastrous for black females. If a poor female heading a household is bad for the males, then logic would indicate that she would be just as disastrous for black girls as well as white children of both sexes (Whittaker, 1991).

Critics of the separation program also point to the fact that program supporters consistently expound on the fact that separation will tremendously assist in building self-esteem in the life of the African-American male, when in fact there is no clear link between self-esteem and academic performance (Tifft, 1990) . A study by Rust (1984) concludes that African-American males score higher than other groups of males when measuring self-esteem; with many expressing racial pride. But there is no study that shows that this high feeling of self-esteem translates into good academic performances. Detractors state that making a child feel good about himself is not a talent exclusively in the domain of the black male teacher. A variety of individuals from many ethnic groups can be very effective working with the African-American male.

This separation concept is also not without its legal problems. Only after a year in operation, the first separate school experiment in Dade County FL, was abruptly halted by the U.S. Department of Education because it violated civil rights laws(Tifft, 1990). The National Organization of Woman (NOW) warned the Minneapolis School Board that the plan to separate African-American males in such schools discriminated by both sex and race and that

the plan should expect a court challenge (Viadero, 1991b).

Supporters of the concept of separation, standing undaunted in the face of this blizzard of harsh criticism, point to the initial success of the pilot projects as being extremely encouraging for expanding the concept of separate schools for African-American males. In the Baltimore separate classroom utilizing a black male teacher, 20 of the 22 boys that originally started the program could read and complete mathematics at or above grade level. However, there is no mention of what the reading and math levels of the boys was prior to entering the program (Viadero, 1991). Other programs are encouraged by what they've seem so far but formal evaluations will not be completed until the school year has been completed.

Summary of Literature

To paraphrase a line from Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, in the scene where the mother listens teary-eyed and devastated as she perceives her son's moral character slowly sinking—deteriorating into an endless decent—she lifts her head and begins to speak in a voice trembling with welled up pain and emotion "...How far down is the bottom?..Lord— please let this be the bottom". For the African-American male student, good news would be that he's on the bottom—the solid bottom—and unable to sink any lower. It's the sad commentary on the condition of the African-American male student when the good news is that he's on the bottom—on the bottom in a world that judge success from the top down. The bad news is that there is no assurance this is the bottom.

The literature reviewed pointedly displays a rather pathetic and dismal academic picture of the African-American male student. As it is stated in *A Nation At Risk* (1984), "...If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to

impose ...this condition, we might have viewed it an act of war." As cited in the findings, there are some African-American educators that feel the African-American male's present condition in education is exactly that, the results of a carefully planned and executed racist assault carried out by numerous local and national governmental servants. In the findings, some critics believe schools have schemed and contrived to keep the African-American male semi-literate and uneducated. By this logic, the system is doing an excellent job, working perfectly as planned. This opinion seems to highly overestimate the competency of public officials, by anointing them with an aura of skill and ability that appears to have escaped their memories when lumbering through other social problems. Why does this perfection only surface here?

Is the condition of the African-American male student, among other considerations, a perfectly orchestrated plan, a perverted comedy of errors, or a mixture of the two? Although there are degrees of truth that racism is certainly present, and in fact, could be the basis for some educational program motivations, it would take more than a plan to work this kind of perfection. The findings would seem to indicate that the present condition of the African-American male student is also the result of mutual collusion. This collusion is between the school and home involves lack of family support; ethnic pride colliding with the desired "culture" of education, and social ills that are pervasive among all ethnic groups that occupy the same low socioeconomic niche. This collusion is also joined by community and government forces that breed another layer distrust—deliberate destructive planning is mixed with the blight of drugs in the community and topped off with random chance, bad luck and simple accidents.

For this situation to have developed to what it has become, it has

required the dumping of lots of social and educational debris from many different sources and directions to create this school quagmire in which the African-American male student presently finds himself entrapped, barely afloat, and sinking out of sight as a participant in higher education.

The most telling statistics as to the condition of the African-American male student and his progress through the school system is the number prepared to enter college. The most glaring set of figures are those produced in the San Diego School District Report (S.D.U.S.D), "Improving the Achievement of African-American Males: Preliminary Report" (1990). The report reveals that 6.5% of the African-American males that graduated from S.D.U.S.D.in 1989, only 3.5% of that group could meet college entrance requirements, while 39% of all others could meet the same requirements.

This would tend to indicate that focusing attention on the number of African-American males that graduate from high school is meaningless. The graduating figure is inflated with individuals that have spent their high school careers on the non-college bound track and have received little or no preparation to attend college. If the S.D.U.S.D. method of calculating African-American male graduating figure is common with other school districts, this could indicate that when a district claims a rising minority graduation rate, whether intentional or inadvertent, could be very deceiving as to the progress African-American males are making toward college. If only 4% of the graduating African-American males can meet college requirements, that means that the other 96% graduated with a diploma that dead ends at the high school door. At best, they will be competing with high school drop-outs for the same low paying jobs. The findings referred to

some of these non-college bound students with high school diplomas as some of the hundreds of thousands of functional illiterates that are graduated by the urban schools, unable to compete for the increasingly technical jobs, and condemned to lives of unemployment and poverty.

The colleges cannot realistically be expected to enroll students that have not been properly prepared in high school to compete on the college level regardless of the number of tutorial and remedial assistance strategies the college may have in place. With the high schools producing so few black male college candidates, there can be little hope that the number of African-American male on college campuses will soon increase.

In addition, findings support the fact that before the enrollment figures of African-American males in college improve, it is absolutely imperative that the number of blacks on the preparatory high school tracks substantially increase. It is difficult for students that were not taught solid basic skills on the elementary school level to compete in middle and high school. It seems very clear, from the findings, that in elementary school the best students, equipment and instruction are reserved for the GATE program. In most school districts, the GATE program is supposedly in place to allow special training, smaller class sizes,quality instruction and attention to these few bright gifted or talented students. However, it would seem that in many districts the GATE program has become a vehicle to integrate schools and separate students according to ethnic groups. Whatever the case might be, the number of African-American males participating in the GATE program is disproportionately low, and the findings indicate that once improvement is made in increasing black participation in this area, the progress of the African-American male will earnestly begin.

The special education classrooms, EMI, SED, LH and other labeled classrooms that serve the learning impaired are presently dominated by African-American male students, above the percentages expected with the recent increased uneven ratio of cocaine syndrome children (Maugh, 1991). Although many of these students are properly diagnosed, the findings tends to indicate that a disproportionately high number of African-American males are improperly placed in special education classrooms. Some school districts use special education to place students that were discipline problems early on in their school career, however, although their behavior may have progressed, once they are labeled (SED, EMI, LH), they can usually be expected to remain in the special education program for most of their schooling.

The findings also seems to give solid evidence that the African-American male does experience racial discrimination in the classroom, that some teachers have low expectations and have stereotyped him as a non-learner. It would seem also that some teachers suffer from the self-fulfilling prophecy syndrome, in which they prove their stereotypes correct. The study demonstrates that the black male is also perceived as unattractive, especially when he's unable to speak standard English, and this perceived "unattractiveness" hurts his class standings. This situation would most correctly be addressed in school hiring policies. The projection for California is that within the next six years, over half, 56% of public school enrollment will be made up of minority children, with the majority being Hispanic—yet school staffing patterns across the state still remain approximately 85% majority (Melendez,1991). However, there was no evidence in the findings to support the fact that more minority staff members

or teachers would dramatically affect the performance of the African-American male.

Negative counter-culture and ethnic pride influences on the educational process of the African-American male student does constitute a serious factor, yet this factor is the most difficult to isolate and identify. The question concerning how difficult it is for the African-American child to enter a GATE classroom away from his 'partners' and friends of the neighborhood does not have an easy answer. Is getting good grades in school perceived as acting white, a label the African-American male tries to avoid? The findings on this factor as it relates to academic achievement of the African-American male student has few answers, but it is this factor, placing a positive black perspective on academics, that has rapidly nurtured the concept of separate schools for black male students.

Although the initial study results of the separate school concept are not available presently, studies seem to indicate that some of the positive results could be attributed to the "boys only" aspect of the program— rather than what is gained by separate ethnic grouping.

A strong opposition to the separation movement is that concentrating the African-American male teaching staff with predominantly black male students denies the positive black male image from the rest of the students. It is just as imperative that African-American females, along with all other ethnic groups, see the African-American male in a positive position instead of always being associated with the negative stereotyped image. It might be more advantageous for the African-American male teacher that he continue to circulate in the general student population.

Finally, the data would seem to indicate that one of the root causes of the poor academic performance by the African-American male student is the

home environment or lack thereof. The lack of the male individual in the lives of many young African-American boys is a reoccurring theme throughout the literature. The astonishing figure that one out of every four African-American males between the ages of 20 and 29 are in some type of of police custody, focuses directly on the problem (Whittaker, 1991). Because of poor education, lack of opportunity or other reasons, African-American males are filling the jails at a rate six times faster than they are filling the college classrooms. Not only does this statistic indicate a shortage of blacks males in the primary family structure, the statistic also shows a depletion of young black men in the immediate extended family structure, such as uncles and cousins. Ever since the African-American was brought, chained and bound, to America, the black family structure has been in shambles. When there is no structure to repair, the building starts at point zero—which means that the African-American family unit is being built from the ground up in a society that is in constant motion. Nevertheless, findings are inconclusive as to whether this factor alone can explain why the African-American male has academically fallen measurably behind all the other groups, including the African-American female.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

The literature review has identified various factors contributing to the academic decline of the African-American male student's lack of participation in higher education, absence from college preparatory courses in middle and high school classrooms and poor academic performance on the elementary school level.

The objective of this project is to review available statistical data compiled by the San Bernardino City Unified School District (S.B.C.U.S.D) regarding the education of the African-American male student. Along with this data review, this project has surveyed a sample of the African-American male students attending S.B.C.U.S.D. The survey concentrated on the students' views and attitudes relating to information reviewed in the literature findings. The survey instrument posed questions about the African-American male student in which the African-American male student is the only qualified individual to address the subject.

Literature findings suggest that the current trend in academic education is for the African-American male to be universally performing poorly. A review of California Basic Educational Data Services (CBEDS) data, S.B.C.U.S.D. data, and survey materials will be compared to that of the findings. The data gained from both the statistical data and student survey will be analyzed for the purpose of making recommendations regarding education of the African-American male student.

Perhaps the greater goal for this project is that it may serve to assist in locating a piece of a larger puzzle which fits into the greater picture. This is a picture that, when eventually completed, identifies answers that will enable the African-American male student to start the long journey toward academic excellence.

METHOD—DESIGN OF PROJECT

The African-American male students selected for this field survey are all attending middle or high school in the San Bernardino City Unified School District (S.B.C.U.S.D.), San Bernardino, California. The data reviewed to establish the present position of the African-American male student in the S.B.C.U.S.D.was compiled from statistics obtained from San Bernardino County School Offices, S.B.C.U.S.D. Statistical Reports and California Basic Educational Data Services (CBEDS). To reveal a profile of the African-American male student in the school environment the literature findings showed information regarding suspension, expulsion and dropout rate of the black male student. However, these areas of concern will not be further reviewed. This project will be reviewing data on academics, tracking, grouping and student self-perception. After a critique of the statistical information concerning these areas, the student survey criteria and procedure will then be established.

The Community.

The City of San Bernardino, which is located in San Bernardino County approximately sixty miles east of the City of Los Angeles, is part of a multi-city community known as the Inland Empire and includes cities in Western San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. San Bernardino, because of transportation arteries, employment and the electronic media, is intertwined with and considered as part of the Greater Los Angeles urban area. A majority of the 140,000 San Bernardino residents are lower to middle socioeconomic status families, and the area is comprised of several ethnic groups in separate and mixed neighborhoods. Although San Bernardino is a growing urban center, there are still large semi-rural and agricultural lands

in the adjoining county areas. One of the largest employers in the city is Norton Air Force Base which was recently targeted for closure and is presently cutting back operations on a time schedule to cease operations in 1995. Although the local school district serves the military families, the closure of the base has been projected to have insignificant impact on the district schools.

In recent years, San Bernardino has been experiencing a sizable growth due to the influx of families migrating eastward from the Los Angeles basin seeking more affordable housing. Many of the new residents of the San Bernardino vicinity still maintain their employment in the Los Angeles area and commute,120-mile round trip, daily. Many of the new arrivals are comprised of African-American and Hispanic families from the central and East Los Angeles areas, Hispanics newly arriving from Mexico and Central American countries and Asian-Pacific families from Vietnam and Kampuchea. Along with the eastward growth from Los Angeles, San Bernardino continues to receive an influx of families arriving from surrounding rural areas, including migrant farm families from the agricultural localities.

This recent community growth has had a tremendous demographic impact on the area, with the Hispanic, Pacific-Asian and African-American communities receiving the greatest percentages of increase in the order listed. This major shift in demographics has had an immediate impact on the school districts serving San Bernardino and other Inland Empire communities.

The School District.

The San Bernardino City Unified School District (S.B.C.U.S.D.), with an

enrollment of 40,176 students, is the 10th largest school district in California and serves the communities of San Bernardino, Highland, Verdemont, Devore and Muscoy. Since the late 1970's, S.B.C.U.S.D. has been under a court-ordered desegregation and integration program involving voluntary busing to achieve racial and ethnic balance. The school district operates 38 elementary schools, eight middle schools, four comprehensive high schools and two continuation high schools. Over half the elementary schools operate on a four track, 60 day on-20 day off, year round school calendar (YRE). A large portion of the families served by S.B.C.U.S.D. are in the middle to lower income range, consequently, approximately 30% of the families receive AFDC and over 50% of the district's students qualify for the school free or reduced charge lunch program. About 30% of S.B.C.U.S.D.students are English as Second Language (ESL), and the District operates 86 classrooms that are strictly mono-lingual (non-English) speaking.

The Faculty. The S.B.C.U.S.D. faculty more reflects the demographics of the area before the recent surge of new students from urban communities nearer Los Angeles. A noticeable percentage of the faculty has been recruited from the mid-western areas of Colorado, Utah, Ohio and Iowa (Jumal, 1991). With a large segment of the teaching staff originating from semi urban locations with small ethnic minority populations, and the new influx of students arriving from the heavily urban Los Angeles area, a cultural gap between staff and students could be widening.

. The S.B.C.U.S.D. faculty ethnic make-up as follows:

Table one Ethnic distribution, S.B.C.U.S.D. faculty—CBEDS 1989-90

	Afr-Am	Asian/Pc	Hispanic	Anglo/white
S.B.C.U.S.D.	11.5%	3.1%	13%	74%
Six adjoining dist.	5.2%	2%	5.3%	86.7%
County	4%	1%	7%	86%
Statewide	6%	3%	7%	81%

Even though there is a disparity between in the student/teacher ratio of African-Americans, 18% students to 11.5% teachers, compared to other nearby districts and the state average, S.B.C.U.S.D. comes closer to a balanced student/teacher ethnic ratio than most districts. The ethnic make-up of the S.B.C.U.S.D.student population qualifies the district as urban impacted, even though parts of the district are still semi-rural. Notwithstanding the fact that *table 1* compares S.B.C.U.S.D with semi-urban districts, S.B.C.U.S.D still has one of the better ethnic ratios of teacher to pupil even when compared to the more urban districts.

The student body. Most recently, the Hispanics have become the majority group in the student population. Current 1990 CBEDS figures breaks down the 41,176 S.B.C.U.S.D. enrollment as follows:

Table two Ethnic distribution of S.B.C.U.S.D. enrollment —CBEDS 1991

Afr-Am	Hispanic	Asian/Pc*	white/Anglo	other
7,391 (17%)	16,137 (39%)	1,900 (6%)	14,672 (36%)	1200 (2%)

* Figure includes Asian, Pacific Islander and Filipino categories

The S.B.C.U.S.D.student population distribution according to the three levels, elementary—K-5, middle school—6-8 and high school 9-12 breaks down as follows:

Table three S.B.C.U.S.D student population according to grade level, gender and ethnicity—1990 CBEDS.("other" column has been dropped)

Level—Count	Afr/Ar	Hispanic	Asian/Pc	Anglo/white
K-5 —23,845	18%	40%	9%	33%
Male/Female	48/52	51/49	52/48	46/54
6-8—9,047	18%	40%	5%	37%
Male/Female	48/52	52/48	50/50	53/47
9-12—8,610	18%	36%	7%	39%
Male/Female	49/51	52/48	53/47	52/48

Table 3 indicates that the the African-American student population in S.B.C.U.S.D remains consistent, 18%, from kindergarten through 12th grade. The figures also indicate that although the African-American male to female fairly consist from K-12, the male gains two percentage points in the high school, from 48 to 50%. However, compared to the other ethnic groups, the African-American group is the only one in which fewer males than females are in the secondary grades.

Tracking. According to official policy, S.B.C.U.S.D does not have tracking, the practice of placing the college bound and non-college bound students in what amounts to separate classrooms with different curriculum. The reason S.B.C.U.S.D does not track is because it has "levels". However, when levels is defined, the definition sounds exactly like tracking. Evidently, the use of the word tracking is to be avoided although the practice of tracking is alive and healthy—operating under the assumed name of "levels". S.B.C.U.S.D has a three-level system operating in the district's four high schools, and students enrolled on the first two of these three levels complete basic college entrance

requirements by the time they graduate. Depending on the particular high school, the top level is known as Honors, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate (IB). Most students on the honors level participate in the GATE program in their elementary and middle schools, thus being academically prepared for some of the most challenging classes—classes that can earn a student college credits while in high school. Since GATE is considered a special education program, statistics are accurately maintained on participants of the program. *Table 4* shows the ethnic and gender distribution of Honors level students:

Table four Ethnic and gender distribution of honors level students

S.B.C.U.S.D statistical report

Level—Count	Afr/Ar	Hispanic	Asian/Pc	Anglo/white
High school—770	10%	17%	7%	62%
Male/Female	41/59	54/46	44/56	49/51
12th grade—75	5%	12%	10%	71%
Male/Female	28/72	53/47	36/64	59/41

In reviewing *table four*, even though both the African-American male and female decline in numbers, it is the male that displays the lowest figures. Of the 75 senior honors level students for the entire district, only two are African-American male. The next tier in the S.B.C.U.S.D system at the high schools is the college preparatory level. Students enrolled on the "prep" level are taking the proper course work to meet the college entrance standards. Since the preparatory level is part of the regular education program, statistical data is not available as to the ethnicity or gender of these participants. Likewise, without prep track figures, it is difficult to ascertain how many African-American male

students are actually being prepared for college entrance. What can be utilized as a reasonably accurate gauge of the percentage of ethnic distribution on the prep track are the students that complete the A-F requirements. The A-F requirements are entrance standards established by the University of California system for high school seniors, and the A-F is compiled by CBEDS according to ethnicity and gender.

Table six Completion of University of California A-F entrance requirements

CBEDS 1990

Level—Count	Afr/Ar	Hispanic	Asian/Pc	Anglo/white
9-12 enrollment total 8,610	18%	36%	7%	39%
Grads completing A-F—378	15%	19%	12%	53%
Male/Female dist. of A-F	36/64	48/52	44/56	49/51

Another means of obtaining a somewhat less reliable figure on the number of African-American males enrolled on the prep track is by actual head count in a small percentage of classrooms and deriving an average figure for the district. Using the averaging method, approximately 12% of S.B.C.U.S.D college preparatory students are African-American—and of that 12% figure, less than 1/3 would appear to be black males. Regardless of the method used to derive at a fairly accurate figure for the number African-American males participating in college level courses, they are grossly under-represented when compared to the African-American females and other ethnic groups.

The third tier in the S.B.C.U.S.D system is the non-college bound or average level. On this level, the students are prepared for a high school diploma—period. The classes designated for this level do not meet college entrance criteria and are usually not transferable. Again, the average level is part of the regular education program of the District, so there is no requirement

to maintain separate data as to the ethnic break-down of the students enrolled. To arrive at approximate figures for the ethnic distribution of student enrollment on the S.B.C.U.S.D average level, the A-F figures were subtracted from the 12th grade total graduates plus another 10% that participated partially on the college tracks, but were not were not included in A-F figures. tested.

Table seven Percentage of S.B.C.U.S.D senior students enrolled in the non-college (average) level classes 1990

Level—Enrollment	Afr/Ar	Hispanic	Asian/Pc	Anglo/wht
12th grade 1144 Non-C bound	212	329	83	520
	M/F	M/F	M/F	M/F
% enrolled on non-college level	70/30	47/53	55/45	49/51

Tables seven & nine demonstrates how the "number of graduates" statistic can be very misleading. The graduation figures include the number of all diplomas issued, with the majority issued to non-college bound students. Again, the African-American male disproportionately dominates the non-college bound graduation figures. Non-enrollment in college bound courses does not exclude students from attending college; some of these students will attend a two year junior or community college in an effort to complete college entrance requirements. However, this route usually proves to be a difficult avenue to college for many who attempt it—mainly because they were not enrolled in high school classes that developed necessary academic skills required to compete on the college level. African-Americans comprise 18% of the graduates in 1990 and 18% of the student population, but of that 18%, 79% were non-college bound.

Table nine Ethnic, gender distribution of S.B.C.U.S.D graduates —CBEDS 1990

Level—Count	Afr/Ar	Hispanic	Asian/Pc	Anglo/white
Graduates—1652	18%	25%	9%	48%
Male/Female	42/58	48/52	45/55	48/52

The eight S.B.C.U.S.D middle schools do not operate on the three level system. There is the GATE program, special education, and then all other students. The students from middle schools are placed in their high school classes (levels) according to teacher recommendation. Student must complete classes on the honors or preparatory level in order to be be placed in classes that meet college admission requirements. Recommendations by teachers to place students on these two levels are based on middle school grades in English or social studies of "B" or better in eighth grade—"C" or better if the student is in the GATE program. Classes in these subjects must be taken concurrently for the student to maintain eligibility for the college level classes. In middle school in S.B.C.U.S.D, the GATE program is the fast lane to the college level classes in high school.

Table ten: Ethnic and gender distribution of GATE students in middle school—S.B.C.U.S.D statistical report

Level— Count	Afr/Ar	Hispanic	Asian/Pc	Anglo/white
Middle school—704	11.5%	20%	9.5%	57%
Male/Female	38/62	46/54	44/56	51/49

As the data from *table ten* indicates, the participation of the African-American male student in the GATE program is disproportionately low and

most of the African-American students enrolled in the middle school GATE program are female. Also, these figures indicate that the African-American male in S.B.C.U.S.D is following the pattern established in the literature findings, that he begins to separate in academic performance from the black female in middle school.

Grouping. GATE Program. in S.B.C.U.S.D elementary school. The S.B.C.U.S.D GATE program is housed at different school sites across the district with many of the GATE classrooms located on school grounds in minority areas. To maintain an ethnic balance in the schools, Anglo/white parents can volunteer to enroll their children in a GATE classroom that is located in a predominantly minority school which helps achieve statistical ethnic balance in the school district. Although this practice achieves the paper illusion of ethnic balance, it places a disproportionately high number of Anglo/white students in the GATE program for the actual purposes of ethnically integrating schools, rather than for the stated purpose of GATE—an enrichment program for the gifted and talented children. Sometimes this integration happens only in the statistics, because the GATE classes frequently are placed in classrooms in a different wing or building away from regular classes. Some have separate recesses and staggered lunch periods allowing little if any interaction between the GATE students and other children at the school. Some schools housing the GATE program maintain two parent groups—one for GATE and one for regular students. These parent groups meet separately. Since GATE is a special education program, it maintains a separate categorical budget, separate personnel to maintain the budget and separate materials and equipment that are for the exclusive use of the GATE program. With the GATE students arriving and departing the school on separate school

bus transportation, the impression could easily be gained that there were two separate and distinct schools operating under the same roof.

Table eleven: Ethnic and gender distribution of the S.B.C.U.S.D K-5 GATE program

Level—Count	Afr/Ar	Hispanic	Asian/Pc*	Anglo/white
Total % of ele. student pop.	18%	42%	6%	34%
1st grade GATE enrollment.	18%	15%	6%	56%
3rd grade GATE enrollment	17%	14%	7%	62%
5th grade GATE enrollment	11%	27%	8%	54%
5th grade Male/Female	44/56	42/58	50/50	50/50

These figures reflect the trend established in the findings, that the academic progress of the African-American male student is the closest to the other groups at the first grade level. As grade levels increase, the African-American male academic progress begins to separate from other groups along with the African-American female. This trend establishes early in the S.B.C.U.S.D.and continues through high school.

Ability grouping, reading.—the placing of children in learning groups within the classroom according to ability—has been the established practice of school districts for many years. Although some teachers have gone to extremes by placing students in ability groups for mathematics, social studies and science, by far the most prevalent practice of ability grouping is in reading. In the 1989-90 school year, the S.B.C.U.S.D. adopted a new literature based reading series that, among other considerations, is aimed at the elimination of ability grouping in reading. In the new reading series, every child in the class has the same reading book and teachers are encouraged to teach reading in a single group, replacing the in classroom practice of grouping of students in

three, or more reading levels with different text books.according to ability. When ability grouping was used, students who were not in the top reading group were many times taunted as being "dumb" by the the other children. Many of the children in the "dumb" book became very self-conscious and at times would refuse to even attempt read.

Under the new cross-level single group reading series, the good readers are modeling for the poorer readers by having all children read in the same group and carry the same book. The new reading program advances the use of secondary reading activities and supplementary literature selections to allow all students to excel to their full reading abilities. The program is specifically designed to serve the needs of the top-end readers .

Reading is the most important skill to be mastered in the primary grades and reading alone can be the key to placement in programs such as GATE. By second and third grade, all students must take placement tests that begin to determine their future schooling. If the student cannot read the test or reads it poorly, the child will not only score low in reading, but in all sections of the test including areas where they could be very talented. Children that were not a part of a pre-school program that included some academic training, numbers, shapes, colors, letters, or exposed to a reading environment at home, are at a distinct disadvantage when they enter school. Because some children lack this pre-school reading exposure, they could be placed in the "low" reading group—perhaps destined never to escape—considered a poor student all the way through high school or until they dropout.

The survey administered to S.B.C.U.S.D. students, attempted to address the question of these students' early reading patterns as well as other areas relevant to students' participation in Gifted programs.

Procedure for Survey

Seven of S.B.C.U.S.D.'s twelve middle and high schools were asked to allow African-American male students to participate in an anonymous survey concerning their self-perception of school, educational goals, peer group influence and home environment. Of the seven schools requested, six participated, and one middle school declined to take part. Of the six schools participating in the survey, three are middle schools housing the 6th to 8th grade students, and three are high schools—two with student populations from 9th to 12th grade,and the newly re-opened high school that serves 9th and 10th graders only.

Upon clearance with the principals at each of the six campuses, there was either a teacher or administrator assigned as contact person and for distribution of the survey instrument to a cross-section of the African-American male students. The sampling included students in GATE programs, special education classes, honors, and average track. The contact person sometimes enlisted the assistance of another teacher to help distribute the survey to a representative sample of the African-American male students. The contact person was asked to make certain that all teachers assisting in the survey make it clear to participants that the survey was voluntary, and that names were not affixed to the survey form. Students were also assured of anonymity and were encouraged to answer questions honestly. All instruments were distributed and collected between April 6, and May 10, 1991.

Instrument

The survey instrument contained 38 queries with the first ten developed as

fill- in-the-blank, with four of these queries requiring an open-ended reply. The other 28 queries were designed on a Likert scale from 1, strong disagree to 4, strongly agree. The instrument was specifically designed to fit on the front and back of a single sheet of paper so as not to discourage students who did not feel like doing a lot of reading. Large, bold face letters were used at the top of the instrument informing students not to write their names on the survey. Also, the instrument purposefully excluded queries about drugs or gangs. Although queries in these areas may have revealed some insight on a few of the students, the overall effect of questioning students about gang and drug involvement might well have served to diminish their enthusiasm about participating in the project.

The four areas investigated by the survey instrument are 1) Home and family, 2) Attitudes about school and education, 3) Negative peer group pressure and 4) Ethnic self-esteem.

Home and Family. The queries in this area ask about the home environment, who the student lives with, male role models, parents' reading habits, type of discipline received at home, and what kind of job or business they want to participate in after leaving school. According to literature findings, the only response that should be anticipated is that most African-American male students are living with their mother only. Questions as to what social class or income group his family belonged, were considered not within most of the students' privy to know; consequently, queries in these areas were not posed.

Attitudes about school and education. In this section of questions the students are asked about the importance of good grades, what they like most and least about school, if they are in college-bound classes, if they intend to go to college and what they feel about teachers. Findings indicate that

communication gap exists between African-American male student and teachers. Also, findings tend to indicate that college is not high on the agenda of many African-American male students.

Peer group pressure. Queries in this group focus on whether friendships are important than succeeding in school, "hangin'" out in the streets, is using standard English or getting good grades "acting white" or if they were ashamed to receive good grades because of their "partners". Although findings identifies this area as a serious concern, no direction was confirmed as to what a survey of African-American males might disclose although findings sighted instances where good grades were not that desirable. .

Ethnic self-esteem. How do the African-American male students feel about the concept of separate schools for black males? In this section of queries, the students will be asked the importance of African-American history, if they presently learn about black history, and if they think they would relate better to black male teachers. In this area, findings only indicate that the teaching of African-American history should rank as important.

Limitations

This project utilized the services of a contact person on each of the selected school sites to distribute the survey instrument, which left the contact person with an almost impossible responsibility of making sure that the sample of students surveyed reflected an accurate cross-section. An alternative method of choosing the survey subjects would have been to use the district or school student records to make a random selection. However, the difficulty with using computer print-outs to make random selections is that anonymity must be maintained—yet the subjects ethnicity must be identified. Also, to utilize district equipment and personnel hours would require a budget, of which this project had none. One of the contact persons at a school site reported that one of her

eighth grade students took it upon himself to go to different classes and distribute the survey instrument, and she stated he did an " excellent job". Having to single out one ethnic group—males only—in a school environment, and survey a representative sample of that group is more difficult than it first appears. When properly instructed and supervised, utilizing the students themselves to assist in conducting the survey proved to be the least threatening method of collecting this type of focused, ethnic data. The students were a welcome and helpful addition to this project.

ANALYSIS

The African-American male (AAM) student population at the six S.B.C.U.S.D. schools that participated in the survey numbers 746. There were 180 survey instruments distributed, approximately 30 per campus, of which 138 were returned to the project. Of the available 746 African-American male students on the six campuses, 18.5% participated in and responded to the project. A sample of 138 responses also represents 9% of the entire middle and high school African-American male student population in S.B.C.U.S.D.

The survey tabulation was first arranged according to school site in order to determine if the school staff/student relationship made a significant impact on the responses and, if so, which queries were most affected. The school site is evidently a factor to be considered—especially on queries pertaining to teachers, and like or dislike of school. However, it appears there was no measurable impact on the other areas of query caused by the school site impact. For example, students responded to the queries as to what they most and least liked about school. At four of the six schools the teachers were liked "most" and "least" in about the same numbers, while the two other schools, a sizable majority of the students expressed a dislike of the teachers. This was the only major instance where it seemed that the school site of these to schools was out of sync with the others.

After completing the review of school site influence, the survey instruments were then sorted according to grade level, comprising three strands, 6-8, 9-10 and 11-12. It is within this configuration that the final tabulations were compiled. The survey queries were grouped in accordance to these four areas; 1) home and family, 2) attitudes toward

school and education, 3) negative peer group pressure and 4) ethnic/self-esteem.

Home and Family. Literature findings indicated that most African-American families are headed by single mothers. The responses from the S.B.C.U.S.D. students reflect the same approximate pattern that research seem to indicate. A majority of the African-American male students surveyed on all grade levels live with "mother only" headed households. Students residing with their mother and stepfather were counted as living with both parents. Most students responding that they lived with a "relative", identified the relative as being their brother. This differed somewhat from the findings which indicated that grandmother is usually the "relative" other than mother with which most students resided. Less than 1% of the students surveyed stated that they lived by themselves.

Table twelve: Q. With whom are you living at the present time?

Responses 133

Grade level	Both parents	mother	father	relative or guardian
6-8 graders	40%	45%	7%	8%
9-10 graders	40%	53%	0%	7%
11-12 graders	34%	50%	7%	9%

The students were surveyed as to their future plans in life after they had completed schooling. The answers to this query indicates growth in maturity in the 11th and 12th grades. The 6th-8th graders see professional athletics in their future, but a more realistic perspective develops by their senior year. A majority of the African-American male students surveyed selected employment, business or a profession that requires a college background.

Table Thirteen: Q. What kind of business or job do you want to be a part of when you leave school? Responses: 133

Business or employment	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-12th
Professional Sports	42%	19%	4%
Professions (medical, law mgmt)	19%	25%	36%
Computers	5%	9%	11%
Military	3%	8%	9%
Law enforcement	0%	9%	7%
Industry, contractor	2%	9%	11%
Show business	6%	3%	1%
Undecided	15%	13%	10%
Other	9%	5%	11%

Table thirteen indicate that the middle school students can be strongly influenced by the professional athlete. After father and brother, the most mentioned male role model was Michael Jordan. This pattern is also seen in the data represented in *table fourteen,*relating to responses about male role models. However, the father becomes the stronger role model in the senior years of high school.

Table fourteen: Q. Is there a male person in your life that you admire or look to as a role model? Yes 49% No 51%. Who? Responses: 138

Person or role model	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-12th
Father	23%	32%	35%
Brother	18%	23%	30%
Another relative	16%	11%	17%

Continued

Person or role model	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-12th
Professional sports personality	27%	14%	15%
Entertainer	18%	16%	2%
Other	11%	4%	1%

When queried about reading material in the home, once again, a majority of the responses were positive. However, according to the replies, an average of 31% of the students surveyed come from homes where little or no reading is modeled.

Table fifteen:Q. My parents or guardian spends time reading books, magazines or newspapers in the home.

Responses: 136 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	19%	57%	14%	10%
9th-10th graders	21%	47%	21%	11%
11th-12th graders	31%	38%	26%	10%

The final query in the family-home section was if the parents expected the student to attend college. In the response to this query, there was a strong correlation between those students that felt their parents expected them to go to college and a query in the *attitudes about school and education* section as to whether they were aware of what track they were on or if they were enrolled in college preparatory classes. Those students that were aware that they were taking college prep courses also stated affirmatively that their parents expected them to attend college. This correlation tends to indicate that there is parental support in the home for these students.

Table sixteen: Q. My parents expect me to go to college:

Responses: 134 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	66%	25%	9%	0%
9th-10th graders	56%	20%	19%	5%
11th-12th graders	53%	20%	23%	4%

Attitudes About School and Education. The African-American male student's attitude toward the school environment was solicited in the survey by a opened-ended question format so the student could express his feelings clearly. Tables seventeen and eighteen display their most positive and negative responses. In this section of the survey, more than one answer on some of the instruments was tabulated, so the columns do not always total 100%.

Table seventeen: Q. What do you enjoy most about school?

Responses:138

Like most about school	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-12th
Classes, learning	22%	28%	24%
Everything	2%	5%	8%
Math	6%	5%	8%
Teachers	4%	7%	8%
Friends	18%	16%	15%
Physical education, sports activities	22%	21%	19%
Lunch	9	7%	6%
Girls	4%	10%	16%
Other	3%	-%	4%

Table eighteen Q. What do you like least about school?

Responses:138

Dislike most about school	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-12th
Teachers	12%	15%	27%
Don't like anything	9%	20%	5%
Rules, discipline, detention	18%	8%	15%
Dressing for PE	5%	7%	-
Closed campus during lunch	-	8%	-
Get up early, walk to school	14%	21%	10%
Homework	4%	-	5%
Class work	14%	32%	18%
Math	11%	2%	5%
Security Guards	-	-	10%
Other	4%	2%	5%

This is the section of the survey that is most influenced by the school site personnel and rules. At one of the school sites, the hostility by some students directed toward the school staff was candidly reflected with comments in the margins of the instrument and marking "disagree" (where applicable) when relating to teachers with five or six check marks. On the other hand, teachers were mentioned as one of the "most liked" aspects of the school environment by students at another one of the school sites. No pattern can be derived of *tables eighteen and nineteen*. It is very difficult to draw any conclusions from this particular data because it is so easily influenced by the rules, procedure and personnel at a specific school site. The most significant aspect about *tables eighteen and nineteen* is that major differences can exist among school campuses of the same district, most of which is generated from personnel staffing at the schools. Also, it should be noted that responses to another query,

as to whether they perceived ethnic prejudice by teachers toward black male students, the "strongly agree" replies overwhelmingly came from students attending the same two aforementioned schools where poor staff and student relations was noted.

As reflected in table sixteen, many of the students and parents are unfamiliar with tracking or levels that operate in the school district—yet many express an interest in going to college, unaware that their specific school program is not college bound. This question was posed to 11th and 12th grade students in S.B.C.U.S.D.:

Table nineteen Q. Do you know what academic "track" you are on, or if you are enrolled in any college prep classes?

Responses: 76

Grade Level	Yes	No
6th-8th graders	n/a	n/a
9th-10th graders	15%	85%
11th-12th graders	26%	74%

The next two queries concern future interest in attending college and desire to enroll in college preparatory classes. The responses indicate that there is considerably more interest among African-American males in preparing for college than their numbers actually enrolled in the prep classes tend to indicate:

Table Twenty- Q. Going to college is important to me.

Responses: 136 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	50%	38%	11%	1%
9th-10th graders	79%	14%	2%	5%
11th-12th graders	47%	27%	22%	1%

Table Twenty-one Q.I would like to take college prep classes:

Responses: 129	strongly			strongly
Grade Level	agree	agree	disagree	disagree
6th-8th graders	61%	11%	15%	13%
9th-10th graders	48%	32%	13%	7%
11th-12th graders	36%	48%	7%	12%

Here, there appears to be serious gap between student aspirations and student actuality—desiring to go in one direction, yet with no plans to get there. However, some students commented that they did not enroll in the college prep classes because if they failed, athletic eligibility would be jeopardized. Evidently, maintaining eligibility for high school sports has become the immediate objective for a few of the students surveyed.

It was suggested in the findings that good grades might, by design, not be the most coveted prize for the African-American male student. These queries were posed to the students:

Table Twenty-two: Q. Getting good grades is important to you.

Responses: 136	strongly			strongly
Grade Level	agree	agree	disagree	disagree
6th-8th graders	69%	31%	1%	0%
9th-10th graders	83%	17%	0%	0%
11th-12th graders	75%	17%	5%	3%

Table Twenty-three: Q.I would like to be known for making good grades.

Responses: 135	strongly			strongly
Grade Level	agree	agree	disagree	disagree
6th-8th graders	50%	43%	5%	2%
9th-10th graders	69%	29%	0%	2%
11th-12th graders	55%	35%	5%	5%

The responses indicate that the overwhelming majority of those surveyed agree that good grades are important and they desire to achieve top marks. Several references in the literature findings that suggested that the opposite attitude maybe more prevalent, that grades were unimportant. Findings referred to data collected from more urban impacted school districts than S.B.C.U.S.D., such as Washington D.C., and Baltimore, which might account for the sizeable difference in student attitudes. Peer influence on school performance is difficult quantity to measure, and perhaps somewhat difficult for any survey instrument to ascertain.

The next three queries inquire as to how the African-American male student perceives the teacher. As previously mentioned, queries pertaining to teachers portray a wide variance of opinion depending on the school site. These highs and lows are leveled out in table twenty-four to reflect the average.

Table Twenty-four Q. Most of the time, teachers are fair toward me:

Responses: 134 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	16%	54%	16%	12%
9th-10th graders	25%	55%	15%	5%
11th-12th graders	36%	48%	7%	12%

There was a secondary correlation between the individuals that felt the teachers were unfair and the same students expressing dislike for school in general. Although they do not all "strongly agree", a sizable majority of the African-American male students surveyed "agree" that teachers are fair.

Table Twenty-five Q. I feel that the teachers have prepared me properly to compete for grades in school:

Responses: 86 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	-	-	-	-
9th-10th graders	30%	45%	17%	8%
11th-12th graders	25%	35%	37%	3%

Although the majority "agree" that they have been properly prepared, the 40% of seniors that "disagree" is a very significant number, especially since it increases from a 25% figure in the previous year. This number is significant because many seniors have taken college entrance examinations and have a better sense of their progress.

Table Twenty-six Q. Teachers encourage me to go to college..

Responses: 136 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	32%	43%	14%	1%
9th-10th graders	54%	24%	10%	12%
11th-12th graders	35%	28%	20%	17%

Interesting, but not surprising, there is a strong correlation between the students that responded that they do like school and teachers,and those that responded "strongly disagree" teachers encourage them to go to college.

Negative Peer Group Pressure Toward School. Literature findings indicated there is pressure on the African-American mále to "dumb down" in school by his peers or "runnin' buddies" in order to remain "in" with the crowd. This negative counter culture influence supposedly labels many things such as being smart in academics, speaking standard English and attending GATE

classes as "white acting". Questions concerning these issues were put directly to the African-American male students:

Table Twenty-seven Q. I would rather "hang-out" in the streets than go to school or do school work.

Responses: 133 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	4%	6%	14%	76%
9th-10th graders	5%	4%	10%	81%
11th-12th graders	0%	11%	29%	60%

Table Twenty-eight Q. I must hide my real abilities "smarts" so I can be accepted by my partners or friends.

Responses: 138 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	5%	22%	33%	40%
9th-10th graders	9%	12%	19%	60%
11th-12th graders	12%	3%	22%	63%

Table Twenty-nine Q. I feel the GATE classes are mostly for whites.

Responses: 138 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	5%	11%	40%	44%
9th-10th graders	16%	8%	31%	45%
11th-12th graders	10%	10%	17%	63%

Table Thirty Q. I choose not to be involved in school activities because my friends might think I'm trying to "act white".

Responses: 136 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	5%	4%	35%	56%
9th-10th graders	0%	0%	29%	71%
11th-12th graders	2%	3%	12%	83%

Table Thirty-one Q. Speaking standard English is trying to "act white".

Responses: 136 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	8%	11%	28%	54%
9th-10th graders	10%	17%	43%	40%
11th-12th graders	2%	10%	25%	63%

Table Thirty-two Q. Getting good grades is acting "white".

Responses: 136 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	1%	2%	20%	77%
9th-10th graders	0%	5%	28%	67%
11th-12th graders	2%	2%	16%	80%

Literature findings from data collected from schools in Washington D.C. and other urban cities indicated that being branded "acting white" was a serious factor in the poor achievement of the black male student. In some polls, nearly 90% of the students felt that speaking standard English was trying to "act white". The survey conducted by this project in S.B.C.U.S.D. could find no evidence to support this issue as a serious factor. To the contrary, being accused of "acting`white" does not seem to be a even minor factor according to students

surveyed. A sizable majority of the African-American male students have no concern about being "shunned" by peers for attempting to speak standard English. Any casual listener on any of the six surveyed campuses would conclude that Black English is the language of choice for communication among black male students and others. Therefore, the responses regarding standard English must indicate that either the use of standard English in its "proper" place does not constitute a problem, or, there is no problem as long as the use Black English is not threatened or disallowed.

It would seem that the most important factor disclosed in this set of queries is the fact that a negative counter-culture against good grades has had little, if any impact. Striving for good grades is considered very important by an overwhelming majority of the S.B.C.U.S.D. African-American male students sampled. This is not to say that the negative counter-influence on black males students does not exist, but it is beyond the scope of this instrument to assess.

Ethnic Issues And Self-Esteem The queries in this section consider what the African-American male students think about a separate school for black males and how they feel about a more Afrocentric curriculum. For the purposes of this project, Afrocentric curriculum only refers to the inclusion of the teaching of African-American history as a part of the regular classroom. The literature findings did not state as to what, if any, opinion the black male student expresses toward separate schools for himself.

Table Thirty-three Q. I would like to attend a school that is specifically designed for black male students only.

Responses: 136	strongly			strongly
Grade Level	agree	agree	disagree	disagree
6th-8th graders	13%	6%	38%	43%
9th-10th graders	17%	20%	27%	36%
11th-12th graders	17%	5%	43%	35%

Whether the time for the separate school for black males has long past—or is in the distant future— today, it is not a popular concept among the African-American male students surveyed. There seems to be very little support for a school for African-American males only. However, the 17% that "strongly agree" is a significant percentage and may indicate the existence of a group with a strong commitment to ethnic pride. Also, there was again, significant correlation between the students that answered positive for a separate black school and students that did not like school and who disliked or felt teachers were unfair.

When asked about black male teachers, a number of the students wrote on the margin of the survey instrument, "what's that, I never had one of them", an in jest comment that reflects the fact that there is a very small number of African-American males available for, and teaching in the public schools.

Table Thirty-four Q. I relate better to a black male teacher.

Responses: 136 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	32%	28%	30%	10%
9th-10th graders	37%	32%	17%	15%
11th-12th graders	34%	31%	27%	8%

A majority of the students surveyed agree that they could relate better to a black male teacher, and again, the student that answered with negative attitudes toward schools and teachers overwhelmingly supported the idea of black male teachers.

Table Thirty-five Q. It is important to me to learn about black history and culture.

Responses: 138 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	67%	29%	2%	2%
9th-10th graders	88%	10%	0%	2%
11th-12th graders	71%	23%	3%	3%

Table Thirty-six Q. I have learned about black history and culture in my school classroom.

Responses: 137 Grade Level	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
6th-8th graders	19%	32%	19%	30%
9th-10th graders	17%	20%	12%	51%
11th-12th graders	12%	20%	23%	45%

There seems to be a wide gap between what the students would like to be exposed to in the classroom and what they are receiving. A majority of the students surveyed "strongly disagree" that they have learned much about black history and culture in the present classrooms.

Summary of Analysis

Overall, much of the information obtained in statistics and survey indicates, with few minor exceptions, that the African-American male student in the S.B.C.U.S.D. operate close within the patterns established in the literature findings. The Living arrangements of the African-American male students in S.B.C.U.S.D. are very similar to the pattern established in the literature findings, a sizable majority of the students live with a single mother as head-of-household. A majority of students surveyed indicated that they would like to

enter a business or profession that requires college experience— most surveyed felt that their parents expect them to go to college and over 70% surveyed "agreed" that making good grades was important. However, only a small percentage of the students surveyed knew if they were enrolled in college prep classes—even though most answered that going to college was important to them. Even so, CBEDS and District data indicate that less than 12% of African-American male students are enrolled in a program for college entrance.

When queried about their attitudes toward teachers and administration, 78% "agreed" that the teachers treated them fairly, 60% feel they were properly prepared to compete in school and 63% stated that the teachers encourage them to prepare for college. Although comparative figures on these queries with other ethnic groups are unavailable, it would seem that over 60% positive response regarding teachers tends to indicate a less than hostile relationship exist. The survey also indicates that there is a major difference in attitudes by students, as expressed towards teachers and staff, depending on school sites within the same school district.

With regard to negative pressure on the African-American male student by peers to "dumb down" or hide "smarts" to be accepted, this notion was rejected by students, with over 75% of the responses, "disagree". Also, the students surveyed rejected as well the suggestion, 76% to 24%, that speaking standard English was "acting white". Regarding separate schools for black male students the students surveyed rejected the concept, responding 43% disagree and 36% strongly disagree. While on the other hand, over 60% agreed that they could better relate to a black male teacher. On the matter of Afrocentric curriculum, over 90% agreed that black history should be instructed in the classroom, and more than 65% of the African American male students felt that black history was

not being taught in the classroom presently.

The focal point of this survey was directly on the African-American male student in S.B.C.U.S.D. for the purpose of establishing his present condition and comparing his progress measured against findings in other school districts. When using utilizing statistical data, CBEDS, cross-comparisons with other ethnic groups can be readily concluded. However, within the design of this project, there is no companion survey of another ethnic group or the African-American females that utilize the same queries. For example,"Going to college is important to me"— the sample obtained is not comparable to another group. Therefore, there is no gauge to establish whether a response of 60-70% by the African-American male is high or low. Accordingly, in the absence of such comparisons, consideration of this fact has been included in all recommendations and conclusions drawn from the survey data.

CONCLUSION

"Every child can learn." These words ring like hollow euphemisms usually found cloistered on "Mission Statements" developed by school districts expressly for reading at the appropriate occasions, but otherwise, the words are filed away with Christmas tinsel, Halloween "scaries" and other seasonal ornaments. Should the words "every child can learn" be taken seriously?

When reviewing the academic progress report of the African-American male student in school districts across the country, what emerges is a consistent pattern of poor performance and under-achievement. In light of such a consistent record of failure, the easy way out for some educators is to conclude that every child can't learn— that the African-American male is ineducable, prone to disruption, and therefore, mentally inferior to other ethnic groups. This illusion of innate disability that is cast by drab statistics, allows some educators a sense of complacency that justifies their lack of action. In tolerating a lack of action toward the condition of the African-American male student, these same educators have resigned themselves to the fact that every child can't learn, and they allow the condition black male student to fester in an attitude of benign neglect.

If an educator chooses, in an unspoken code of silence, that the African-American male is ineducable, there are great quantities of data that can be arranged in such a way to support this claim. However, there is still the problem of explaining the few success, the few—in proportion to other groups— African-American males that successfully conclude their education within the system as it now exists. I am of the opinion that it is a far more difficult task to explain the educational successes within a group that has been dismissed as innately

ineducable and, therefore, expected to fail— than it would be to explain why a group that can be educated, fails on a consistent basis.

Then, if every child can learn, why the consistent failure in school of the African-American male? Although there were some minor variances found in S.B.C.U.S.D. from the patterns established in literature reviewed, the major picture remains unchanged—poor academic performance, disproportionately low number completing college requirements. The survey indicates there are some immediate steps schools can take to increase the positive numbers of the black male student, such as; correcting the inequities inherent in tracking and grouping, the inclusion of African-American subject matter in required curriculum, making the GATE program more available to the total student population, and improving the communication between student and staff as to their course requirements. Suggested corrections in these areas could increase the African-American male student's participation in colleges-bound classrooms a few percentage points forthwith. However, these suggested changes might only be considered cosmetic— when the problem being treated appears to be more deeply rooted.

If the cause of this African-American male student failure is placed predominantly on the door-steps of the schools, the failure rate would not be uniform, it would ebb and flow according to good and poor schools across the country. For the failure rate to reflect such a pattern as presently exists, the primary source of the of the problem must reside within an entity lying closer to the bosom than the school—home and family.

The data developed in this projects indicates by inference that fewer than 12% of the parents of the current generation of African-American males students were successful in their school experience. The pattern that begins to

emerge is a "cycle of school failure", parents that did poorly in school, now have the responsibility to prepare this generation, and the children of this generation will cradle the next—and so on. This cycle of school failure seems to be spinning simultaneous with other identified cycles that afflicts the economically disadvantaged communities such as welfare, poverty and crime. If part of the school failure rate is intertwined with other social issues, how can the schools advance on problems unilaterally? Apparently, they cannot; the school must work in unison with the family.

Since the education of the child begins at the home, the thrust of the school to improve education for the "at risk" child must involve the home on a continuous basis. Intervention strategies reviewed by this project such as San Diego Unified Schools Project, have developed many on-school-site programs designed to support the African-American male student. These strategies are solidly based, however, programs have met with minimal success. One reason might be that low priority was originally placed on parent participation. On the other hand, the pilot program developed by the Oakland Unified School District is designed to bring the young parent back into the classroom as both a student gaining basic skills missed were in school, and also assisting as teachers of their children.

It is the view of this project that the most important key to breaking the cycle of failure for the African-American male student is by schools establishing support programs working directly with parents. Re-involving the parent in school as a learner and provider, especially on the primary K-5 level, is essential. Many parents of today's failing students are the former students that occupied Special Education classes, considered discipline problems and the odds indicate that they are also the dropout. In most instances, school to many

of these parents or guardians was a negative experience and their children are just re-cycling through the same system. This is the one of the major reasons why massive parent involvement is so important, having the parent buy-in to the process, becoming part of the inside as a valuable partner.

The survey also indicates that, second to the father, the older brother is usually the male model the African-American student most respects. Having the older male sibling involved in the educational process is a valuable asset, he could the most influential individual the school systems could hope to acquire for assisting the progress of the African-American male student.

Every child can learn. It is not a hollow slogan, it should be the unshakable resolve of the educator, and the responsibility of the educator is to transform this lofty concept into tangible, concrete results. Educating two generations simultaneously is the type of program that will, given time, deliver the positive results most desperately sought to arrest the downward slide of the African-American male student. This approach to the problem should not be designed for the short term. Working directly with parents, the same parents that in many instances were part of the failure cycle, is a stride toward the long term solution. Working on a long term committed basis with the parent could be that piece of the larger puzzle, that fits into the greater picture—a picture that when eventually completed, reveals the answers that will enable the African-American male student to start the long journey toward academic excellence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establishment of parent support apparatus on a district-wide basis for the purpose of long-term, simultaneous, education programs designed to maintain parent involvement in the classroom as both provider and learner. The programs should be inclusive of, but not limited to:

   A. Reading classes designed for the parent to attend at the school site, supplied with reading materials developed to coincide with their child's instruction.

   B. Parent classes on how to assist their child in developing reading skills.

   C. Parent courses in the areas of reading and language at local school sites where by parents can earn high school credits toward college.

2. Identify African-American male children with GATE potential in the early grades, K-3, and supply direct support to the home which should be funded as part of the GATE program. This support to the home should include an "academic adoption" program in which teachers, or community individuals are encouraged to take a long term interest in a child's academic development.

3. Establishment of a long term program in which African-American male students that have most recently attended the high schools are utilized as peer counselors and tutors on the elementary, middle and high school levels. The program should make priority the inclusion of those African-American males that have siblings attending school in the district.

Suggestions for Consideration

The survey indicates that school districts can presently increase African-American male student participation academically by:

a) Designing a program that encourages parents to model reading in the home environment.

b) Integrate the GATE program into the rest of the school site environment in such a way that the African-American males participating in the program are not perceived differently than the other students he must relate to at school and in the neighborhood.

c) Open and continuous communication between staff and student in middle and high school regarding college preparation courses; the second most important fact the student should be aware of, after the name of his school, is what track or class he is enrolled. The staff should make sure the students understands the different consequences of course enrollment.

d) The school athletic department and coaches should be cautioned that encouraging students to take the non-college bound courses and thus avoiding academic challenges for the purpose of maintaining athletic eligibility is not in the best interest of the student.

e) Specific inclusion of African-American History in the curriculum on all three levels of schooling, with movement on the high school level toward and elective course in African-American/ethnic studies in social sciences.

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APPENDIX

Survey Instrument

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY

1.) What is your present age? ____ School_____

2.) Circle your present grade. 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

3.) Presently, you live with (circle one) both parents / mother only / father only / another relative (relationship) or guardian _____.

4.) Did your parent/guardian ever go to college? Yes___ No___

5.) What kind of job or business do you want to be part of when you leave school?_____

6.) Is there a male person in your life that you admire or look to as a role model? Yes__ No__ If yes, who?_____.

7.) Do you know what academic "track" you are on, or if you are enrolled in college prep classes? Yes__ No__.Which track?_____

8.) What method of discipline do you receive at home? _____

9.) What do you enjoy most about school? _____

10.) What do you like least about school? _____

Please place an (X) on the line that most represents your feeling about the statement or question. Put an (X) in the 4 column if <u>YES</u>, strongly agree down to an (X) in the 1 column, <u>NO</u> if you you strongly disagree.

	4 YES strongly agree	3 agree	2 disagree	1 NO strongly disagree
11.) Getting good grades is important.	____	____	____	____
12.) Going in the military is more important than going to college.	____	____	____	____
13.) Going to college is important to me.	____	____	____	____
14.) It is more important to make "quick money" than to pursue higher education.	____	____	____	____
15.) I would rather be in classes with my friends than in classes that require homework.	____	____	____	____
16.) My parents /guardian spend time reading books, magazines or newspapers at home.	____	____	____	____
17.) I would like to be known for making good grades.	____	____	____	____
18) Do teachers encourage you to go to college?	____	____	____	____

OVER

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	4 YES strongly agree	3 agree	2 disagree	1 NO strongly disagree
19.) I must hide my real abilities [smarts] so I can be accepted by my partners or friends.	____	____	____	____
20.) Getting good grades is "acting white".	____	____	____	____
21.) I feel the GATE classes are mostly for whites.	____	____	____	____
22.) I have been placed in Special Education classes.	____	____	____	____
23.) I'm considered a discipline or behavior problem.	____	____	____	____
24.) I choose not to be involved in school activities because my friends think I'm "acting white".	____	____	____	____
25.) I feel most of the time I'm in trouble at school is because I'm black.	____	____	____	____
26.) Speaking standard English is trying to " act white".	____	____	____	____
27.) My parents expect me to go to college.	____	____	____	____
28.) Black females are smarter in school than black males in school.	____	____	____	____
29) I would rather "hang-out" in the streets than go to school or do school work.	____	____	____	____
30.) Most of the time the teachers are fair toward me.	____	____	____	____
31.) I'm made to feel "dumb" in class when I can't understand the class work.	____	____	____	____
32.) I want to take college prep classes in school.	____	____	____	____
33.) I feel that the teachers have prepared me properly to compete for grades in school.	____	____	____	____
34.) I feel intimidated in the classroom when most of the other kids read better than me.	____	____	____	____
35.) I would like to attend a school that is specifically designed **only** for black male students to attend.	____	____	____	____
36.) It is important to learn about black history/culture.	____	____	____	____
37.) I have learned about African-American history and culture in my school classrooms.	____	____	____	____
38.) I relate better to Black male teachers.	____	____	____	____